

July 14, 2017

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Senators Cardin, Boozman, Klobuchar, Capito, and Baldwin,

Thank you for introducing S. 1514, the Hunting Heritage and Environmental Legacy Preservation for Wildlife Act (“HELP for Wildlife”). This is a truly bipartisan bill that includes a range of provisions designed to improve the management of fish, wildlife, habitat, and outdoor recreation including hunting and fishing. On behalf of the millions of hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts from all 50 states represented by our organizations, we express our support for the HELP Act and your bipartisan efforts to advance the interests of sportsmen and women.

HELP for Wildlife would reauthorize important conservation programs including the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. It would establish a National Fish Habitat Conservation Act to conserve fish and fish habitat through partnerships that enhance fish and wildlife-dependent recreation. HELP for Wildlife prioritizes recovery of the Chesapeake Bay by reauthorizing the Chesapeake Bay Program and Chesapeake Bay Initiative through 2022. The Chesapeake is our nation’s largest estuary and a legendary fishing, boating, and waterfowl hunting location. These programs provide funds for a regional partnership that coordinates the ongoing restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed, and they support the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network.

HELP for Wildlife would provide funding and support for the construction and expansion of public target ranges on national forests and Bureau of Land Management lands. Public ranges are in short supply in many areas and this bill would help meet the increasing demand for safe places to shoot. In addition, expanded recreational shooting infrastructure will help generate additional conservation revenue by facilitating shooting sports activities that are fundamentally linked to dedicated excise taxes on firearms, ammunition and archery equipment through Wildlife Restoration program.

HELP for Wildlife makes sure normal agricultural practices are not mischaracterized as otherwise prohibited attempts to bait migratory game birds. It also exempts lead sport fishing equipment from regulation under the Toxic Substances Control Act. Finally, it affirms previously issued U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rules to remove wolves in the Great Lakes and Wyoming from the Endangered Species Act, returning management of these populations to state wildlife agencies.

We applaud your leadership on this bipartisan conservation and outdoor recreation bill. We also encourage your collaboration with your colleagues in the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources in order to get the best ideas from both committees and ensure the greatest likelihood one or more packages of sportsmen bills becoming law.

Sincerely,

American Sportfishing Association
Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
B.A.S.S.
Boone and Crockett Club

Camp Fire Club of America
Catch-A-Dream Foundation
Center for Sportfishing Policy
Coastal Conservation Association
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Conservation Force
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl Foundation
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
Izaak Walton League of America
Mule Deer Foundation
Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Professional Anglers Association
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Trappers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
North American Grouse Partnership
Northwest Sportfishing Industry Association
Orion – The Hunter's Institute
Pheasants Forever
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Safari Club International
Shikar Safari Club International
Texas Wildlife Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Whitetails Unlimited
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute